2 PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

This chapter describes the two alternatives considered in the EA:

- **The Proposed Action** – namely, construction of the first phase of a new building – T Block – at the Defense CEETA complex to accommodate approximately 250 new employees that Defense CEETA would hire to accomplish operations critical to its mission. The Proposed Action also includes the construction of the first phase of a new parking structure.

- **The No Action Alternative** – namely, no construction of a new building or a parking structure, and no hiring of additional personnel.

Subchapter 2.1 outlines how the proposed site was selected as the location for T Block and the parking structure. Subchapter 2.2 addresses the No Action Alternative, while Subchapter 2.3 describes the Proposed Action.

2.1 Site Selection

Defense CEETA already employs a large workforce at its facility on Fort Belvoir. Although off-site, leased office space was considered for expanding Defense CEETA's operations, it would be very expensive to extend the existing communications systems to an off-site location. Further, it would not be reasonable to move established operations and personnel to a different location. Thus, consideration of site alternatives was restricted to the existing Defense CEETA facility on Fort Belvoir.

The project proponent considered several sites around the perimeter of the existing complex before selecting appropriate sites for T Block and the parking structure. The alternative sites were rejected as unreasonable as they were deemed to be less acceptable environmentally. Specifically, the selected location was determined to be the least disruptive because both T Block and the parking structure would be constructed on paved parking lots, the only demolition required would be the removal of trailers, all required utilities would be available in the immediate vicinity, and only minimal grading and excavation would be necessary.

2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, Defense CEETA would not hire any new personnel, and there would be no need to expand the existing facilities. The No Action Alternative is not considered reasonable, since additional employees are needed to support operations critical to Defense

CEETA's mission, and current facilities within the complex are inadequate for accommodation of scheduled projects. However, the No Action Alternative is analyzed in this EA because it provides a measure of the baseline conditions against which the impacts of the Proposed Action can be assessed.

2.3 Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is to construct T Block to an initial size of approximately 100,000 gross square feet (sq ft) (9,290 square meters [sq m]), with the capability of expanding the building in the future. In Fall 2004, approximately 250 new Defense CEETA employees would be provided with office and work space in the initial T Block building. The building would be capable of incremental expansion to 122,000 gross sq ft (11,334 sq m), and ultimately to 290,000 gross sq ft (26,942 sq m). If implemented, these potential, future expansions of T Block would be addressed in follow-on environmental analysis in accordance with NEPA.

The first phase would be built in the northeast part of the UTB Parking Lot in the current location of the East Annex, southeast of the existing Defense CEETA Main Building and the UTB Building. The East Annex comprises two triple-wide trailers, currently used for administrative and office space, that would be demolished under the Proposed Action. The fewer than 20 personnel who currently occupy the East Annex would be relocated to existing office space within the DCEETA complex. If constructed, the second and third phases would expand T Block to the southwest.

T Block would be constructed of reinforced concrete and steel. The building would be constructed to five stories, with four levels above ground and one level below ground. T Block would have a footprint of 20,000 gross sq ft (1,860 sq m) when the first phase of construction is completed. An approximately 250-ft (76-m) long elevated, covered walkway, or sky bridge, would be constructed to connect the first-phase T Block building to the Main Building.

The Proposed Action also includes the construction of the first phase of an approximately 1,100-stall, reinforced concrete parking structure in the existing West Parking Lot, southeast of the proposed T Block. The parking structure would be constructed in two phases. If implemented, the second phase of the parking structure would be addressed in follow-on environmental analysis in accordance with NEPA.

During the first phase, a 550-stall parking structure would be constructed on the west side of the West Parking Lot, with frontage along an internal road. The initial parking structure would have a footprint of approximately 36,000 sq ft (3,340 sq m). The existing one-lane, unpaved road that runs along the perimeter of the Defense CEETA complex, to the southeast of the West Parking Lot, would be widened to two lanes and paved to provide access to the new parking structure.

The Proposed Action

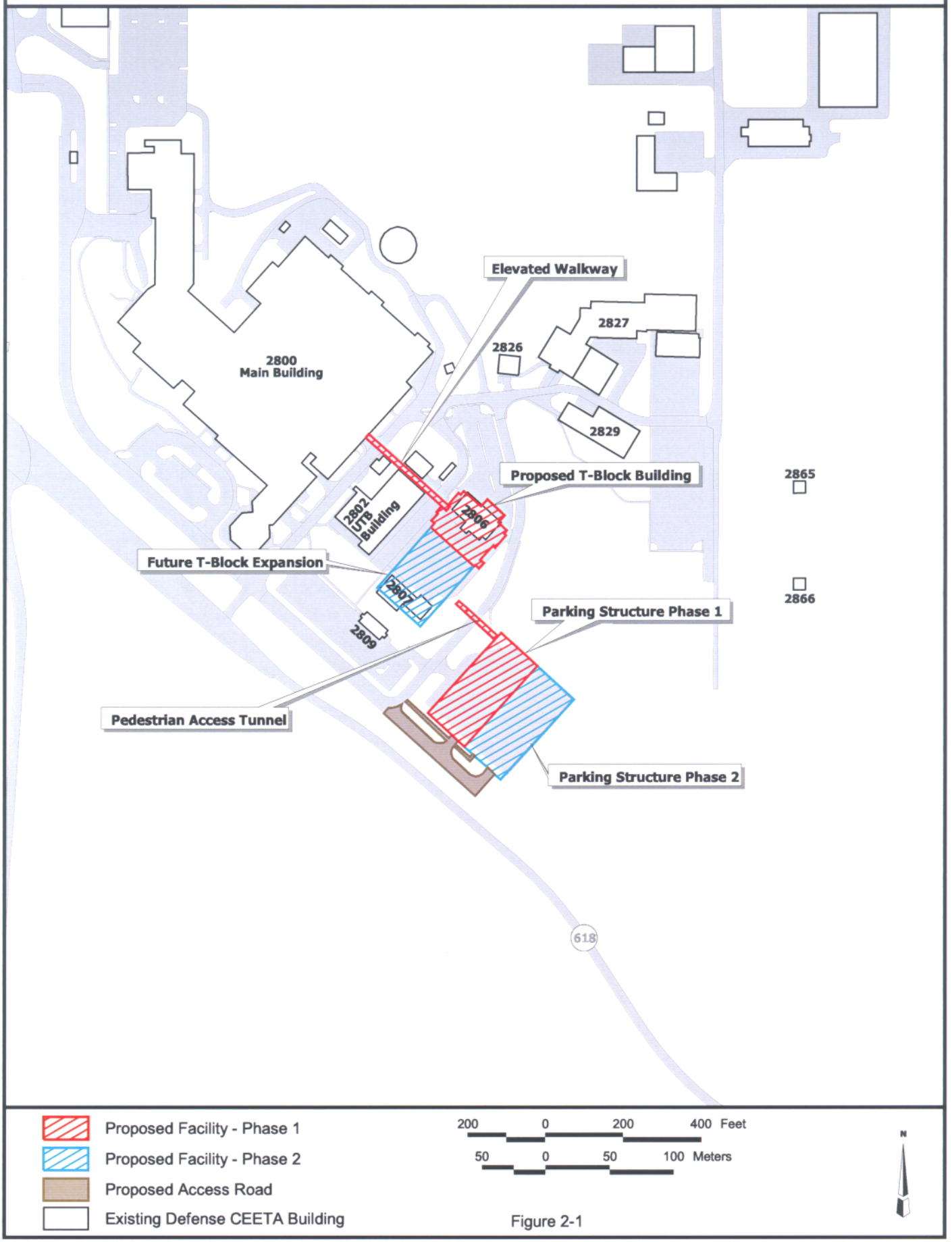

Figure 2-1

The initial, five-level parking structure would provide 250 parking stalls for the new T Block. The structure would provide an additional 300 parking stalls to replace existing parking stalls that would be removed from the UTB Parking Lot to construct T Block and from the West Parking Lot to construct the new parking structure.

During construction of the first phase, the back (east) half of the existing parking lot would be used as a construction lay down area. This part of the West Parking Lot would be available for parking again after construction. Although less convenient in terms of distance to buildings, adequate alternative parking areas within the Defense CEETA complex would be available throughout construction. The second phase, if implemented, would utilize the back half of the West Parking Lot to provide approximately 550 additional parking stalls.

Because of the approximately 20-ft (6-m) drop in elevation between the proposed parking structure and the proposed T Block, a concrete-walled tunnel would be constructed to provide pedestrian access from the parking structure to T Block. Provision of the 100-ft (30-m) long tunnel would also enhance handicap access, convenience, security and safety.

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